Chapter 10
ADVOCACY

Along with your support of a battered woman to make her own choices must go a readiness to act on her behalf when appropriate and to be a strong advocate for her. This is discussed in detail in PCADV's manual on advocacy, part of which appears as the first selection in this section. Following that is an article by Barbara Traczek, which highlights the importance of carrying out the advocate role in a way that is both effective and empowering for battered women.

Staff and Volunteers as Advocates

According to Webster's Dictionary, an advocate is one who works on behalf of, or in support of a cause or program The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence and its members are the advocates of the programs, which are working to prevent and to improve services offered to the victims of domestic violence and their dependents. But it is you, the volunteers and staff working in a shelter or on a hotline, who serve as the personal advocate for the victim. It is vital to you and to your program that you know, understand, and practice advocacy skills because each woman coming to you for help needs someone to support her. Your work as an advocate will be very time and energy consuming, not only because it touches all of your work with the women and their children, but is also one of the most important jobs to be done in a domestic violence program.

For the purposes of this manual, advocacy skills have been divided into five major areas: support; self-awareness education; information and instruction as to the various alternatives and community services available to the victim and how to work with each; assisting and accompanying the victim through the systems she will deal with; and when appropriate, intervening on behalf of the woman. As advocacy skills are practiced, you will find that the areas are not so clearly defined; rather, the skills will become second nature to your work and you will use them as needed as part of your daily contact with the women your program serves. But to understand them as clear and separate tasks is imperative if you are to be able to use them to the best advantage of the women you serve.

Support

One of the keys to being a good advocate is to be supportive. Your goal in being supportive is to help the woman to get in touch with her strengths and to gain the confidence to make the difficult decisions on how to resolve her problem. You may find that the woman is in need of peer support as well as the support you are able to give because in many cases the woman needs reassurance that she is not alone in being a victim of domestic violence.

Being supportive means you will need to employ active listening skills. The women you come in contact with need to be able to ventilate their feelings. They need to be reassured that their feelings of anger, hurt, and frustration are okay - that there is nothing wrong with those emotions. But, you will have to help the women put those feelings into perspective, so they do not become overwhelmed by them. The women you serve have felt isolated for a prolonged

period of time, and they are looking to you to listen without being judgmental or opinionated. What they need most is the encouragement you can give through your listening ear and emotional support to help them regain a positive self-image and self-confidence.

You, the advocate, will have to display a lot of patience, acceptance, and understanding, because those are the qualities the women have found lacking, in most, if not all, the systems they have dealt with to this point. An advocate must be careful, too, not to challenge or to threaten the woman because to do so may bring back the anxieties and fears they are trying to overcome.

Your reward from the support you can give a woman is to see her find the confidence to begin working toward a positive solution to her problem and the strength she needs to never lose sight of that goal.

Self-Awareness Education

Self-awareness education is the process of helping the woman rediscover and rebuild a positive self-image. This process is aided by your support. As when you are being supportive, you want to help the woman find the confidence and strength to solve her problem; but in self-awareness, you go beyond listening and supporting. In self-awareness, you assist the woman in locating her specific strengths and weaknesses. You can do so by asking the woman to list or articulate what she considers to be her individual skills and personal strengths. You, however, want to guide this so the woman's strengths are emphasized.

The women seeking help have suffered not only physical abuse but also verbal abuse. Many of the women have come to believe all the negative attitudes and reactions to them as people and it will not be easy for them to overcome the years of poor self-image. As a result, it is important that you continually emphasize her accomplishments. You will need to draw on the woman's past experience, training or employment. You want to let the woman see that her past did contain responsibilities, which required skills, and talents that she either possesses now or can regain through training.

The woman, also, will need help understanding her weaknesses. At this point, the woman may believe her weaknesses are so many and so great that no matter what her strengths, she can never succeed in changing the course of her life. Through your support, you can help the woman to accept her weaknesses and to see that all people have weaknesses to face and to overcome.

The most important element in self-awareness education is to help the woman view herself in a positive light. The advocate can accomplish that goal by providing support, while the woman assesses and identifies the skills and talents she may have forgotten and by helping her recognize that to have weaknesses is normal.

Information and Instruction

Information and instruction is the practical matter of discussing the alternatives and resources available to help the woman resolve her problem. To properly inform the woman, the advocate must take the time to know what the woman's alternatives are, what community-based resources are available, how to use the resources, where they are located, and who the woman is to see if she chooses to use the resource. This means that you should help establish and keep up-to-date a file on the resources in your community as well as establish and maintain ongoing

contacts with as many resources as possible.

The resources you will want to be familiar with include: legal services and what they can offer; social service agencies; educational resources such as high school equivalency tests and continuing education; financial aid such as welfare and social security; employment opportunities; and available public and private housing.

In order to help the woman take full advantage of the community resources, it is important that the advocate knows and understands the eligibility requirements for the various resources. It is helpful, also, for the advocate to know what the woman will need to take with her when she goes to see the people in an agency and what she can expect for the resource. The better the woman's understanding of what is going to be expected of her and what she will need to take to her appointment, the better the chances of avoiding any unnecessary delays in service.

A most important item for the advocate to remember during this process of informing and instructing is to permit the woman to make her own decision about the alternatives and resources available. You must keep in mind that any decisions made will impact not on your life, but on the woman's you are trying to help.

Once again the supportive skills will aid in this advocacy area. You want to be supportive of the woman as she finds the confidence to make the practical decisions about resolving her violent situation.

ACCOMPANIMENT

After you have properly informed and instructed a woman about the available services and alternatives, it may be necessary to go with her or assist her in obtaining information in order for the woman to take Full advantage of the resource.

Accompanying a woman to a resource is important, also, because your presence may be the support she needs to begin to take charge of her situation.

Just as in the support and self-awareness education skills, accompaniment is another step in helping the woman find the self-confidence to resolve her problem. Your presence is to help the woman feel comfortable and more at ease with the steps she has to take.

When it is appropriate, encourage the woman to go to a resource on her own; but if she is not ready to do it alone, it may be appropriate for you to accompany her.

Once, again, it is important for the advocate to remember to let the woman make her own decisions. When meeting a resource, always permit the woman to speak for herself and to handle the situation on her own. You are with her for support and strength; you are not to do the job for her.

INTERVENTION

From time to time, the resources in your community may not be responsive to a woman, or a woman may be confused about the proper use of a resource. In either case, you may be called on to intervene with the resource on behalf of the woman.

The job of an advocate, when intervening for a woman, is to resolve the problem by being assertive and courteous. Be sure you understand the situation before calling and never provoke an argument.

Here again, it is best you can help the woman to handle the problem on her own. If you can encourage and support her as she works to resolve the confusion, you will help the woman go another step toward finding the personal resources to handle her life.

In addition an advocate never intervenes without the knowledge and consent of the woman. You, also, will not want to intervene every time the woman has a problem. You are trying to provide an environment for personal growth; you do not want the woman to become dependent upon your decisions.

Those five major skills, which have just been outlined, cover the basic principles of advocacy. You will not always use the skills in the same manner nor will all of the skills be needed for every woman; but if you learn and practice the skills well, you will become a good advocate and an integral part of your domestic violence program.

There are a few general rules, however, that all advocates must keep in mind at all times if they are to be able to practice the skills appropriately.

1. As we have mentioned repeatedly throughout the chapter, an advocate only supports a woman in her efforts to resolve her violent situation. An advocate is not to make decisions, act in place of, or speak for a **woman. The job of the advocate is to help the woman find the confidence and self-**esteem so that she can act on her own. If an advocate takes it upon herself to act for the woman, that advocate is not helping but hurting the woman in her quest to take charge of her life.

2. You, as an advocate, have a responsibility to maintain the woman's confidentiality. Of course, this is a general principle of all shelters and hotlines; but it is important to keep in mind when you help the woman deal with her various problems. Never repeat or discuss with other women, staff of other agencies, or any member of the general public the problems of the person you are supporting.

3. Never be judgmental. As an advocate, you cannot place your values on the woman you try to serve. If you know that for some reason you have a prejudice or bias about a woman, say so. Do not be afraid to tell someone that you cannot help the women, and then permit someone who can help to take the case. You are there for support, not to pass judgment.

ADVOCACY ISSUES

What is Advocacy?

An essential component in any program working to end woman abuse is advocacy. Battered women encounter many barriers when searching for ways to stop the abuse or flee from it. The term advocacy may simply be defined as speaking and acting on behalf of oneself or another person or a cause. Defined in this way, we all become advocates for battered women simply by speaking out on the issue of violence against women, whether it is confronting an offensive joke at a party or accompanying a battered woman to court or the welfare office.

Types of Advocacy

Most advocacies can be classified as:

- Self -advocacy: Representing one's own rights and interests and seeking solutions to a problem by oneself. This form of advocacy is the goal of all other forms of advocacy.
- Systems of group advocacy: Influencing social and political systems to bring about changes for groups of people. Usually a coalition of people, but sometimes an individual, will seek changes, such as changes in laws, establishing shelters where there have been none, or arranging for the removal of barriers to needed services and legal protection; or
- Legal or representative advocacy: Litigation and legislation to establish the legal rights of battered women and to insure that those rights of battered women are not violated. This form of advocacy may be used to benefit individuals or classes or people.

Advocacy can be viewed as a melding of counseling and community organizing, which borrows skills from each area. Counseling skills such as active listening and facilitating personal problem solving are utilized along with researching targets of action, community outreach, and education on the issue.

I Am Only One Person

I am only one person
What can one person do?
Rosa Parks
Was just one person
She said one word
She said it on December 1, 1955.

One person
Said
One word.
She said it on a bus.
She said it to the bus driver.
On the Cleveland Street bus in
Montgomery.

The bus driver said,
"Stand up, Nigger woman.
And give your seat to that white man!"

Rosa Parks.
One person.
Said one word.
The word was, "No!"

One woman
Said one word
And a nation
Blushed!

One woman
Said one word
And a world
Talked!

One woman
Said one word
And the Supreme Court
Acted!

One woman
Said one word
And the buses were
Desegregated.

I am only one person.
What can one person do?

They put her in jail.
Because she didn't "know her place."
Because she didn't "stay in her place."
Because she was an 'uppity Nigger.'

It was a Thursday.
When she said
That One Word.

On Monday
The buses ran.
The Negroes walked.
Each white man had two seats.
Empty seats.
Symbols of a people.
Moved to walk.
Moved to march.
By the sound of
One woman's
One word.
"No!"

One woman
Said one word
And 17,000 people
Walked.

Module 9 – Reading 3

Advocacy Guidelines

The advocate's role is to provide confidential support and assistance to battered women so they can make decisions about the options that are available to them. Many of these guidelines also apply to other kinds of service providers. As a result, these guidelines should be included in trainings for advocates, health care providers, clergy and lawyers. In addition, all participants in a coordinated community response program must follow common principles for intervention that centralize victim safety and batterer accountability.

Advocates must respect differences and avoid assumptions. Advocates may themselves believe certain myths about domestic violence, and should attempt to be aware of any assumptions they might be making. Further, women experience violence in different ways, and advocates should try to be aware of ways in which women may face additional barriers or have specific needs because of, for example, ethnic identity or economic resources.

Confidentiality

Advocates must keep all information about a battered woman strictly confidential. Confidentiality is essential not only to promote a relationship of trust, but also to avoid endangering the woman. If her batterer discovers that she has sought assistance or may be planning to leave, she may be in serious danger.

To ensure confidentiality, it may be necessary to take precautions before contacting the woman, such as leaving messages with a third party, or communicating by mail via a separate mail box number. Advocates and service providers should never speak with other family members, may need to disguise their identity and the reason for the call, and should ask whether it is safe to talk at the beginning of the conversation.

The American Bar Association offers safety tips for lawyers that outline concrete steps that lawyers representing victims of domestic violence can take to protect their client's confidentiality.

Affirmation

Advocates offer moral support to the woman and develop her confidence to use resources to solve the problem. Battered women often feel ashamed of the abuse, are terrified of the abuser, and blame themselves for the batterer's actions. Advocates should try to convey to the woman that it is not her fault, she has options, and she is not alone. Women may take responsibility for the violence in part because of the prevailing myth that victims "provoke" their abusers and "cause" them to lose control; in addition, as a recent news article explains, "taking the blame can also

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provide them a certain false sense of control in a chaotic situation in which control seems mainly to belong to the abuser."

From Lakshmy Parameswaran, Battered Wives Often Recant or Assume Blame, in Women's eNews (30 July 2003).

Some statements that can be used to convey that the woman is not to blame include: "You don't deserve this. There is no excuse for domestic violence. You deserve better." "You are not alone in figuring this out. There may be some options. I will support your choices."

Finally, advocates must respect the decisions the woman may make, even when those decisions are contrary to what the advocate believes would be the best option. As Loretta Frederick explains:

> *"As she contemplates life apart from the abuser, she usually finds herself contemplating poverty or at least a dramatic drop in her standard of living. She may not even know the status of the family finances. She is usually afraid of losing custody of the children to the abuser, a person more likely to have financial resources and other resources necessary to winning the battle. . . . She may fear that she or the children or her parents will be hurt or killed—as has been threatened—if she terminates the relationship or challenges the abuser's control in other ways. She could also fear losing jobs or housing as a result of the abuser's constant harassment at those places.*
>
> *And she may have discovered that she cannot rely on 'the systems', such as law enforcement, child protection or the courts, to protect her or to treat her fairly and without class, race, gender and other biases. Meanwhile, the abuser is turning up the frequency and intensity of controlling techniques, including violence, as his control is threatened by her assertions of independence."*

All of these factors make the decisions facing the woman fraught with danger and difficulty and she may decide not to pursue uncertain legal relief from a system that may have failed her in the past. As Loretta Frederick explains further:

> *"Finally, advocates must bear in mind that each woman is the victim of this type of abuse primarily because she is a woman, that the culture effectively supports the right to control women, and the barriers to her freedom are many. Be not surprised if she isn't able to free herself at this time; be delighted and amazed when she does."*
>
> From Loretta M. Frederick, *Effective Advocacy on Behalf of Battered Women*, Battered Women's Justice Project.

Information

Both advocates and service providers facilitate women's ability to make decisions about the options available to her. Initially, they may help her conduct lethality assessments. Advocates also help women identify needs, strengths, weaknesses, and resources. They provide women with information about different legal, medical and administrative systems and the rules and procedures of these systems. Advocates help

women identify and explore all possible options and possible consequences, assist in developing strategies and a plan of action. They refer her to resources they know are reliable and with which they are familiar. Information provided with referrals can be as specific as the best time to call, who to talk to, and what information she will need to provide. Advocates discuss and rehearse the plan of action, assist in preparation of all necessary documents or requests for assistance, and help rethink plans of action if they fail or if circumstances change.

Decisionmaking

Advocates can provide women with the resources and information they will need to make choices and decisions, but the choices and decisions must be made by the woman herself.

While it can be difficult to see someone stay in a situation in which she is being harmed, there may be many obstacles that prevent the woman from leaving. For example, she may not be able to support herself or her children without the financial support of her husband, and leaving may itself impose an additional financial burden. She may not have alternative housing, or may fear that she will lose her children. She may be reluctant to leave her husband for religious or emotional reasons, face pressure to stay from family, friends or her community, or fear being ostracized by her family or community if she leaves. In addition, leaving entails substantial risks. She may fear that a batterer will carry out threats to harm her, himself the children, friends or family. Battered women are in the greatest danger of severe or even lethal attacks when they attempt to leave, and she is the only one who can judge when it is safe for her to do so.

The Crisis Intervention Network provides a number of models that may be useful for advocates involved in crisis intervention.

Stop Violence Against Women, www.stopvaw.org/Advocacy_Guidelines.
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Module 9 – Reading 4

Advocacy Plan

✏ **Please Note:** *To the domestic violence advocate: The next three readings in this section are borrowed from the website of the Brain Injury Resource Center. Although some of the information is very specific to brain injury resources, the context and general information the articles provide are relevant to the forms of advocacy domestic violence advocates are engaged in.*

Action Planning

A thorough analysis of the information you have gathered is essential to your success. The next step following this analysis is the development of one or more alternative, contingency or back-up plans. Such plans should contain acceptable solutions for your problems, as well as do-able, tangible goals. Your alternative plans should also examine the roles or activities of others who may be helping you. It should also anticipate potential opposition to your plans as well as ideas for overcoming such opposition.

Good planning should include time lines and target dates. Time lines can provide motivation for you to continue working until the problem is solved. They also place limits on how long you are willing to wait for an active response to your efforts.

After you have defined the problem and gathered basic information, the next step is the development of a written advocacy plan. The advocacy planning tool in this chapter will serve as a guide for your own plan. Using the form to write down your plan will help ensure that you have considered all important aspects of your plan and have made the decisions necessary to begin your action.

1. There is nothing magical about a plan – it is simply a problem solving tool – but a very helpful one since you can use it as a road map to guide you through the rest of the advocacy process. In developing your plan you will describe your starting point, your destination, and what you will do to reach your destination. A plan will also include a tentative schedule giving you an idea of when you can expect to reach your goal.

   An advocacy plan will serve as a guide for your action. Use the form (at the end of this article) to write down your plan. It will help ensure that you have considered all important aspects of your plan and have made the decisions

necessary to begin your action.

Elements of the Plan

To start your advocacy plan, write out a short statement of the problem. Although this may seem repetitious if you have followed the problem definition recommendations discussed earlier…., writing a statement of the problem in your plan will help you focus your thinking and it will be a helpful reminder if you get stuck or sidetracked.

Next, decide what you would like to achieve as the ideal solution to your problem and write it down. The need for good record keeping takes on greater significance following brain injury. One of the greatest barriers to successful advocacy is being unclear about what you are trying to accomplish. Impairments caused by brain injuries compromise your ability to understand and be understood. If you are unsure of your goal, talk to friends, relatives, professional advocates and service providers to get ideas. Make notes of such discussion for later reference, a tape recorder is also handy during such discussions.

Be realistic about the options available to you. Your goals should be well considered and well researched. Such precautions will assure that your goals are reasonable and do-able. Remember, it is impossible to turn back the hands of time, what is done cannot be undone. Consequently, your goals, while based on past actions, should be forward looking.

Although it is critical to decide on an ideal solution, it is important to realize you may not reach this goal. It may necessary to make some compromises. In other words, you may not get everything you ask for. To prepare yourself for that possibility, try to see the outcome of your efforts as continuum ranging from getting everything you want, various combinations of some of what you want, and including the possibility of getting nothing.

Decide on some compromise solutions that are acceptable although not ideal. Later, if compromise is reached, you will still achieve an acceptable solution and the other party will probably feel that they have accomplished something by causing you to accept a solution that addresses their needs, too. You probably will also be perceived more favorably if you show a willingness to work out a solution with the other party than if you insist on only one outcome.

The next step in developing your advocacy plan is to list all of the information you need to reach your desired outcome. Divide this list into two sections -- one labeled "Information I already have" and the other labeled "Information I need to obtain."

Review the notes you took and material you collected during the information gathering stage. List laws, rules, regulations, and policies that support your point of view and write down references or citations. In addition, list philosophical, ethical, moral, humanitarian, logical and political reasons for your desired changes. List any facts that need to be established (e.g., that a handicap does exist, that you have been abused or neglected). Add to your list any information that will help show that the

change you desire is needed.

Try to put yourself in the other party's place and attempt to discover how the changes you want could benefit them also. Think of as many reasons as you possibly can and then look back at your list, and decide which are most likely to be effective in influencing the other party. Discuss your ideas with friends and family. Have them suggest ideas, too. Mark the most effective arguments and plan to use these first, but save the others for possible use later.

✏ **Please Note:** *All types of information you still need to get and allow opportunities to gather this information when developing your plan.*

Next, think about the other party. What are their needs, their priorities? What arguments do you expect them to make? Write down these arguments on your plan and then think about what you will say or do in response to these arguments. Write down ideas on how you will respond.

Next, write down a step-by-step plan for how you will approach the other party and argue your point of view. This could involve a sequence of telephone calls, a letter and one or more informal meetings, with a follow-up letter summarizing agreements reached. The method you select will depend on your situation.

You will want to identify the name, telephone number and mailing address of the person you will be dealing with and perhaps some notes on where he or she fits into your life. Such a list might identify a family member, loved one or friend; human service agency; medical and legal firm; your employer or school. When the problem involves business, career, or human services agencies, understanding the chain of command will help identify further steps you can take if a solution is not reached. When the problem involves family, friends and loved ones it becomes important to identify influential parties who could be enlisted as allies.

As you work out your step-by-step action plan, jot down the date you expect to take each step. These dates will be approximate since you cannot control the action of the other party but the dates will help you retain your sense of purpose and direction. Whenever you request something from the other party such as: a meeting; an appointment; a change in behavior; a status report on your case or your relationship; specify when you would like a response to your request. Two weeks is a reasonable time within which to expect a response to most requests. It is certainly sufficient time to expect an acknowledgment of your request including a commitment to respond by a specified alternate date.

Finally, think about what you will do if your plan is not successful. There are almost always further steps you can take to resolve your problem. Such a list might include dealing with others further up the chain of command, and asking for a formal hearing. When such strategies breakdown, you might consider asking for outside

help. Another option might include mobilizing and terminating the relationship.

Working out a detailed advocacy plan is a lot of work but it will help you be more effective and it will increase your confidence. You will develop your own short cuts and time savers as you gain experience. At the beginning, however, we do not recommend trying to proceed without a plan.

Advocacy Planning Guide*

Date: _____

The Problem is: _____

The ideal solution is: _____

An alternate acceptable solution is: _____

Who has the authority to make changes: _____

Name: _____Title: _____

Firm/Agency: _____

Address:_____Email:_____

Telephone: _____Fax:_____

Notes on the chain of command:_____

_____

_____

_____

*Brain Injury Resource Center, 21 Pioneer Bldg. Seattle, WA. 98104-2221, 206-621-8558. http://www.headinjury.com

Module 9 – Reading 6

Systems Advocacy

Systems advocacy is an effort to change policies, rules or laws which determine how services are provided. Whereas previous sections have dealt with individual advocacy, this chapter will focus on changing systems.

There are similarities between the two types of advocacy but there are also important differences. Both types of advocacy involve use of the five phases of problem solving: problem definition, information gathering, and goal setting, advocacy planning, assertive communication and follow-up.

Individual advocacy focuses on changing the situation of one person to protect his or her rights or to improve individual services. Systems advocacy works to change the situations of a whole group of persons who share a similar problem, or to change a service system. Systems Advocacy can benefit many people and strives to prevent problems.

Because systems advocacy works to cause change in organizations, service systems or laws, it requires a long-term, sustained effort by a number of people. It is harder to change how an organization or system treats a whole group of persons than it is to change a decision made by one person about the situation of another.

Although it is more work, a systems advocacy effort is needed when policies or laws cause the same problem for many people and the problems are expected to keep recurring.

Systems advocacy is generally used to change the policies of agencies, organizations or departments which are part of government or are established by government grants or contracts and operated under laws or governmental rules and policies. Frequently, these businesses provide unique services to specific populations, and you can't just take your business elsewhere if you aren't happy with the service.

The advocacy effort could be directed at a local, state, or national agency and it could be directed at changing a written or unwritten policy, or at changing a law. Where the effort is directed will depend on the nature of the problem and which organization has authority over the problem area.

The first step in systems advocacy is to find others who are experiencing the same problem that you are. The group does not have to be large - at least at this point. A small core group can involve others to support its position later. The most important considerations are that the members of the group agree on the nature of the problem and are committed to a long-term effort to change the situation. Finding interested group members is not hard. People often enjoy working as a team toward common goal. The tough problem is keeping people involved over a long period of time.

Keeping members involved requires that all feel a sense of purpose. To create this sense of purpose, there must be clear and specific goals that are achievable in a reasonable amount of time and whose achievement will affect people's lives.

If there are many goals, they should be prioritized and worked on one at a time. Otherwise, members will lose their sense of purpose. So, the first task of the group is to define the problem in specific terms and to set a goal that, when accomplished, will help resolve that problem. If the group has more than one goal, start by working on the one that has the greatest potential for successful achievement since success will solidify the group and create motivation for continued efforts.

The next step in your systems work is to gather information. The information needed is primarily the same type needed to solve individual advocacy problems. Which agency has authority to make needed changes? What laws, rules and policies govern the actions of the agency? What rights and complaint procedures exist? What facts support the need for change? It is very important to learn as much as possible about the organization you wish to change. What is the formal hierarchy?

How are changes made within the organization? Who has power? Who has credibility? How does the organization view itself?

Since organizations are extremely resistant to change, you must identify ways in which the organization could benefit from making the change. Causing the organization great discomfort by public embarrassment is usually not sufficient to cause real change. Organizations have great stability and can weather very heavy stresses

In fact, organizations typically react to advocacy efforts by doing nothing, they just wait until advocates become tired and give up their change efforts. To create real change, you must also create positive incentives that make the change you are trying to achieve attractive to the organization.

To create a positive motivation for change, you've got to get to know the organization well. Attend advisory committee meetings, public hearings and conferences where you can meet staff of the organization. Become familiar with other organizations and key individuals with whom your target organization relates. Use your knowledge of these related organizations to increase your knowledge of your target organization.

A key element of success is the creation of a visible and credible image for your group. You can increase the visibility of your group in a number of ways. Join forces with like minded organizations. You will have to show them how they will benefit from the proposed change, and in turn you will have to show a willingness to support allied groups in their own efforts.

The specific actions you take to achieve your objectives depend on your issue. The actions you decide on should be part of an overall Advocacy Plan. The planning form (Reading #4 in this section of your Manual) can be used, perhaps with modifications, to plan your systems effort. In developing your plan, bear in mind that you are not likely to see any real changes in a single negotiation session. You should view the first session as a success if you are able to define the problem and establish your knowledge of the issues and commit to a long-term effort.

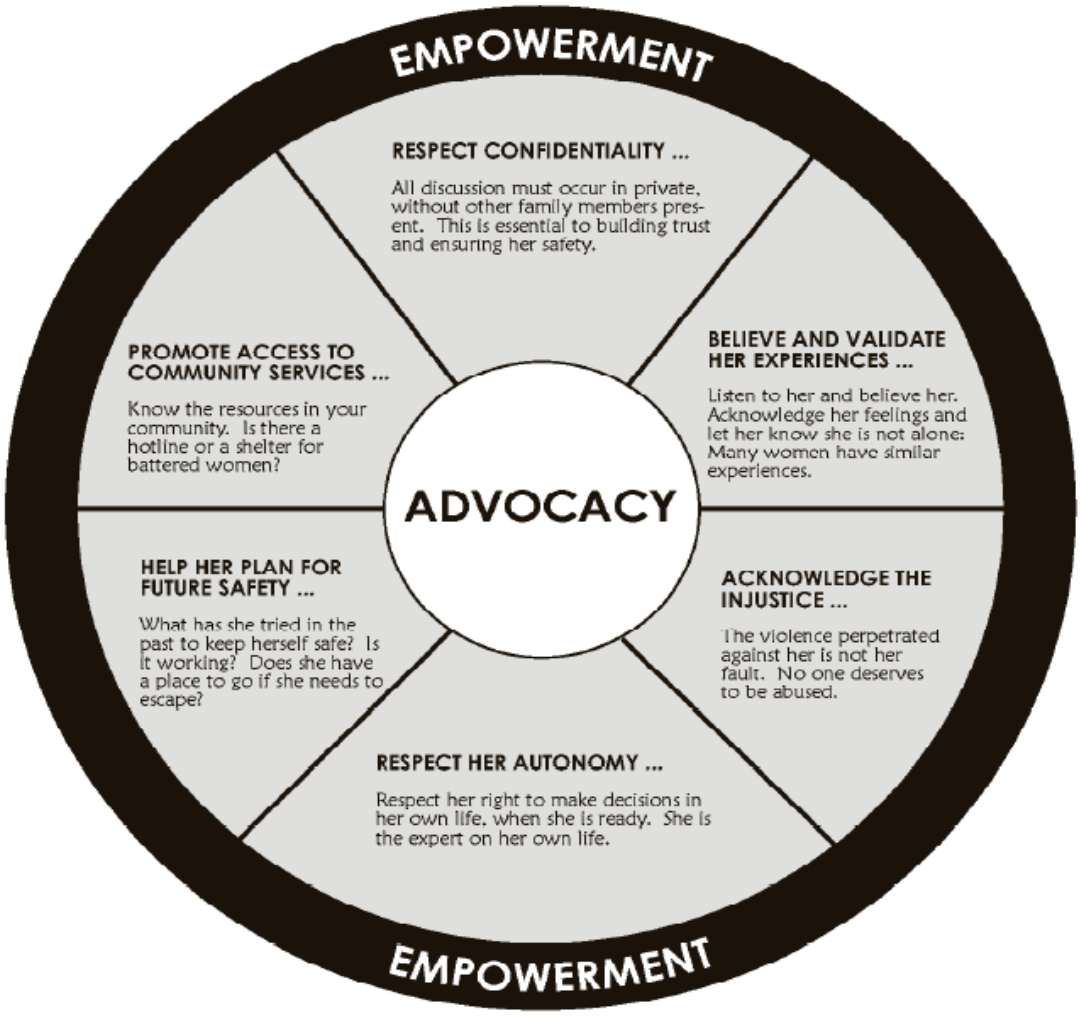
It is not a good idea to accept an initial solution proposed by the other party too quickly. Even if it looks reasonable at face value, it may be designed to pacify more than to create any real change. If you find your group in this situation, take time to study the offer since you do not have to commit to a solution until you are ready. On the other hand, no proposed solution carries a guarantee of success. In many situations, the wisest course is to agree to a proposed solution on a trial basis, being sure to establish criteria which will be used to assess success and a time frame for reviewing the success of the proposed solution.

A systems advocacy effort is a demanding, challenging, and exciting undertaking. It demands care, thought and commitment but the payoffs are well worth the effort. As a novice systems advocate you need not feel alone. Consultation and technical assistance are available from established advocacy groups and agencies such as Protection and Advocacy agencies.

Brain Injury Resource Center, 21 Pioneer Bldg. Seattle, WA. 98104-2221, 206-621-8558. http://www.headinjury.com

Module 9 – Reading 8

Advocacy Wheel


EMPOWERMENT
RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY ...
All discussion must occur in private, without other family members present. This is essential to building trust and ensuring her safety.
BELIEVE AND VALIDATE HER EXPERIENCES ...
Listen to her and believe her. Acknowledge her feelings and let her know she is not alone: Many women have similar experiences.
ACKNOWLEDGE THE INJUSTICE ...
The violence perpetrated against her is not her fault. No one deserves to be abused.
RESPECT HER AUTONOMY ...
Respect her right to make decisions in her own life, when she is ready. She is the expert on her own life.
HELP HER PLAN FOR FUTURE SAFETY ...
What has she tried in the past to keep herself safe? Is it working? Does she have a place to go if she needs to escape?
PROMOTE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES ...
Know the resources in your community. Is there a hotline or a shelter for battered women?
ADVOCACY
EMPOWERMENT

Developed from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.4134

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NATIONAL CENTER
on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy
7800 Shoal Creek, Ste 120-N • Austin, Texas 78757
tel: 512.407.9020 • fax: 512.407.9022 • www.nedsv.org

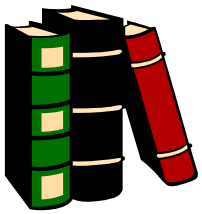
Module 9 – Reading 7

Basic Bill of Rights for Crime Victims

(71 Pa.C.S. §180-9.3)

Victims of crime have the following statutory rights:

- To receive basic information about crime victims' services
- To be notified of certain actions and proceedings about their criminal case
- To be accompanied at all public criminal proceedings by a family member, victim advocate, or another person
- In certain cases, to submit prior comment to the prosecutor on potential reduction or dropping of charges or changes in pleas
- To have opportunity to offer prior comment on a defendant's sentencing through the submission of a victim impact statement (pre-sentence report) describing the effects of the crime on the victim and her family
- To be restored, as much as possible, to her economic status before the crime through restitution, compensation, and the return of property seized and used as evidence
- In personal injury cases and in cases in which the defendant is subject to a PFA order, to receive notice of the defendant's date of release or into any alternative placement, the release of the defendant on bail, and the defendant's escape
- To have assistance in the preparation and submission of financial assistance claims to the Crime Victim's Compensation Board



CounselinglAdvocacylCommunity Organizing & Education

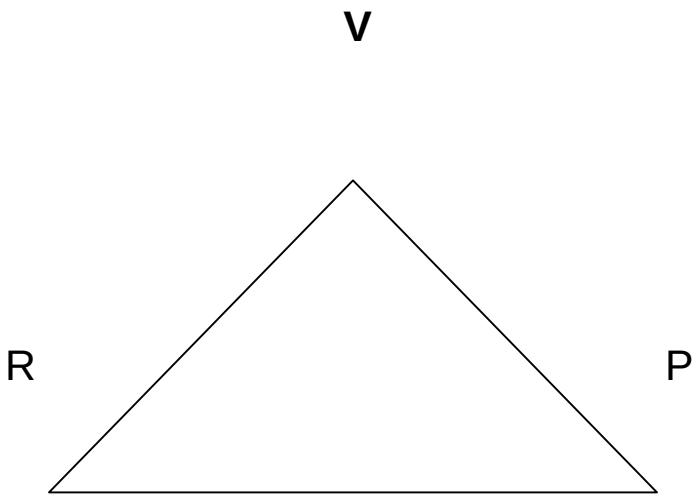
The term advocacy is sometimes associated with adversary proceedings and potential confrontation. Women have learned to be uncomfortable with confrontation. We can develop greater comfort as our advocacy skills and knowledge of systems increases. We can also learn to stress our positive intentions to initiate changes to benefit women in individual behavior and institutions rather than the negative or threatening nature of the advocate role. As our own skills develop we can assist other women in developing these skills and provide assertive role models as well. How we are perceived as advocates is also influenced by our style of advocacy.

Styles of Advocacy

A feminist style of advocacy is based on the goal of helping to empower women. We need to ask ourselves with each advocacy interaction, "Will it help the woman gain understanding to deal more effectively with her situation and make necessary changes?" We want to encourage self-reliance and provide information, which will enable women to do it for themselves rather than do it for them. In our desire to be helpful to battered women, we must be careful not to foster dependency and passivity. A battered woman will benefit much more if we respect her ability to control her own life and help her develop tools to advocate on her own behalf.

Rescue Triangle

A useful concept is that of the drama or rescue triangle from Transactional Analysis. When one person helps another it can be a joyful, profoundly satisfying, cooperative experience. When we fall into the three roles of the rescue triangle, however, this helping can become frustrating and heartbreaking. The three roles in this drama are Victim, Rescuer, and Persecutor.



In a Rescue situation the person helping is called the Rescuer, and the person needing help is called the Victim. A victim is a person who is being overpowered by another person or institution. The persecuting role is the inevitable outcome of the Rescuer and Victim roles. Any person who Rescues by helping the Victim when she is not doing anything to help herself is inevitably going to become angry with the Victim, leading to feelings of persecution in the Rescuer. Every time the Victim is rescued by someone else who is perfectly aware of the fact that the Victim is one-down, that Rescuer is interfering with the Victim's ability to be powerful and is contributing to the one-down position. Therefore, a person who has played the role of Victim in relation to the Rescuer will also inevitably become angry and feel persecuted. It is possible to predict that every Rescuer-Victim transaction will eventually result in a Persecutor transaction. All three roles are easily interchanged so that the Victim may become a Persecutor or even a Rescuer and the Rescuer a Victim or Persecutor.

As advocates we experience this when we put in a great deal of energy helping a battered woman who depends heavily on us to solve all her problems. We neglect to foster her own ability to make decisions and to act on her own behalf. Then when she goes back into a dangerous situation or gets angry with us if things go wrong, we become angry and hurt and turn to blaming the victim, refusing to help her any further.

Keeping the triangle in mind helps us look for signs of Rescuing:

* Leaning forward while the battered woman leans back.
* Feeling that we are doing all the work.
* Irritability, demonstrated in our individual ways (jiggling, etc.)
* Making all the suggestions regarding options.
* Making numerous phone calls for the battered woman.

The role of Rescuer is a role of power and superiority in relation to the Victim. The Rescuer denies or diminishes the power of the Victim to help herself by accepting request for help before it is requested or without expecting participation from the woman requesting help. Persecution will be proportional in intensity to the intensity of the Rescuer or Victim roles being played. Avoiding the roles of the Rescue Triangle maximizes the power of individuals and encourages equality and cooperation in relationships. In contrast, relationships based on the three roles of the triangle are power-structured and create inequality and hierarchies between potential equals. These relationships ultimately support oppressive social systems.

Styles of Advocacy NOT Empowering to Women

- **Aggressive advocacy** where the advocate conceives of her role as taking over and doing everything often leaving the woman out of the picture entirely. This style is often tempting because of our desire to be helpful or to save time.
- "**Smile-and-be-nice" advocacy** in which the advocate plays up to her contacts in agencies to get what the woman needs. Both of these styles can be entrapping because workers in other agencies often would rather deal with advocates than the women. The two workers then engage in dialogue about what the woman needs, rendering her invisible and not in control of her life.

- **Passive, surrendering advocacy** when the advocate herself lacks confidence, is easily intimidated by institutions, and gives up her power to others. It is a "Could I please have?" rather than "We would like" attitude is easily overwhelmed and gives up easily when any obstacle is encountered.
- **Do-gooder, bleeding heart advocacy** is based on a "poor thing" attitude. This style smacks of class bias disguised as sympathy. The advocate feels sorry for the woman and does things for her that she is perfectly capable of doing for herself.

The goal of advocacy work should always be to increase the woman's skills and her ability to take care of herself. If you are a white woman advocating for a woman of color, it is important to be aware that your white privilege plus class and education privilege will often get you much better treatment by institutions. You may be treated like a human being, while a woman of color may be made to feel invisible or be mistreated. In our society, black people are seen as freeloaders (whether on welfare or not) while white people receiving assistance are not stereotyped as a whole race.

Advocacy At-a-Glance: Roles Of The Advocate

1. Provide moral support to develop confidence necessary to use institutions.
2. Provide assistance to help the woman identify her own needs.
3. Provide assistance in identifying her strengths.
4. Help her generate and explore all available options and possible consequences.
5. Assist her in formulating clear requests for action.
6. Assist with information to learn how the system works, its rules, structures and behaviors, including its limitations.
7. Assist her in documenting her request for action and the institutional response received.
8. Assist in escalating her assertive strategies or develop new ones if initial efforts fail.
9. Assist in identifying other options, when negotiation fails.
10. Assist in evaluating what she has learned about herself and the use of institutions from her experience.
11. Encourage her to share what she has learned to assist other women.

Skills Necessary to Develop

+ Good communication skills: active listening; empathy; appropriate use of self-disclosure; owning feelings; etc.
+ Knowledge of and comfort with cultural groups and life-styles different from your own.
+ Needs assessment skills.
+ Ability to use problem-solving and decision-making models.
+ Basic reading and writing skills for documentation.
+ Knowledge of community resources and how to utilize them.
+ Knowledge of institutions their modes of operation, and roles of staff on various levels.
+ Knowledge of the specific rules, procedures, and laws (Pyramid of Power) affecting relationships with the institution in question.

+ Knowledge of the advocate's own needs, support systems, and limitations.
+ Assertive skills, self-assertive (giving and receiving feedback).
+ Negotiation, conflict resolution and constructive criticism skills.

The basic skills of advocacy may be developed and taught to others using these simple guidelines when dealing with institutions.

1. Always get the name and phone number of the person you are dealing with.
2. Keep a record or file of your contacts with the agency. Dates, times, reasons offered, location, promises made, and names should be written down during or immediately after the contact is made.
3. If someone is unable or unwilling to help solve the problem, ask her or him for the name of someone who can help.
4. State clearly what action you would like to see taken. Make your demand as specific as possible, and include a time by which you want a response.
5. State your request as calmly as possible, without expressing anger or frustration.

--From Barbara Traczek, Domestic Violence: The All-American Crime, A Collaborative Model for a Community Response, Milwaukee Task Force on Battered Women and Junior League of Milwaukee, April, 1987

PROBLEM SOLVING

Introduction

Preceding sections of this manual have addressed the general qualities, skills, and techniques, which will help you, provide supportive counseling to a woman in crisis. On a more specific, practical level, there are other ways in which you can provide support. The selections, which follow, outline practical, problem solving approaches to assisting battered and sexually assaulted women who seek our help. 8/90

In order to assist a woman in effectively solving her crisis, it is important that both of you are clear on the goals she is working towards. Furthermore, it is essential that the woman sets her own goals; your role is to assist her in clarifying her problems and to offer support and assistance in solving them, not to solve the problems for her.

Often the woman living in a battering situation feels overwhelmed by the complexity of her feelings and her situation. She often mistrusts her judgment and underestimates her problem solving ability.

The battered woman is faced with making major life-altering decisions. She may feel that the alternatives available to her are not any better than her current situation.

It is important to realize that she may not be ready to make a decision at this time. That is her choice. She may just need to vent and may or may not be able to verbalize this.

Some indications that she does not want to make a decision at this time include:

- Telling you that she just needs to talk;
- Telling you she wants to think about this discussion:
- "Yes, but .." to any identified alternatives, or
- Dwelling in the past.

You can be most helpful at this point by refraining to increase self-esteem, providing support, information, and referrals. Making small decisions now will help her to regain a sense of control and self-confidence.

If she is ready to consider solutions to her problems she may indicate this through:

- Being clear about what she wants to do;
- Focusing on the here and now and the future;
- Statements in which she begins to identify alternatives.

At this point she is ready to problem-solve. You can be helpful in the following ways.

Sorting & Summarizing

This process begins by separating the components of her situation such as legal, housing, and financial. Keep in mind that on top of this she has to deal with the emotional implications of her choices.

Exploring Alternatives

Brainstorm together with the woman to come up with as many alternatives as possible. Be sure that you do not impose your values. And, encourage her involvement in determining alternatives.

Evaluating/Decision-Making

Once the alternatives have been identified the battered woman will need to evaluate each alternative before she can make a decision. You can facilitate this by considering and discussing with her the consequence of each alternative. You can help further by giving any information about resources or services available for each alternative. When making a decision, several techniques may be helpful, such as: listing the pros and cons, fantasizing the outcome of each choice, envisioning the "worst possible" result of a decision and planning what to do if it happened, and identifying the "bottom line" beyond which she will not compromise a decision. The woman will need to reflect on this information and choose those alternatives she feels are best for her. Remember--she must make her own decision.

Setting Goals

Each alternative chosen becomes a goal. It will be helpful to identify the tasks necessary to achieve each goal. It is important that the tasks identified be small and specific. A specific target date should be chosen for accomplishing each task. Planning should be very specific and should include communication between the woman and you or another counselor to assess the situation as it develops and to make further plans. By helping her establish goals in this way, you can help her set up successful experiences for herself and begin to regain a sense of control over her life.

Advocacy

Coupled with your support of a woman to make her own choices must be a readiness to act on her behalf when appropriate and to be a strong advocate for her. The important point in terms of support is that it is not supportive to “take over" for the woman in areas where she can do it for herself; in fact, it has the opposite effect of reinforcing her sense of helplessness and dependence. However, when you and a woman decide you should take an advocacy role in a given situation, you must be willing to be assertive in getting information from authorities and in communicating clearly to them on behalf of the woman; insist on clear information and complete answers from them. Again, do this on the woman's terms so she has the opportunity to learn to handle authorities and to communicate what she wants communicated.

Building Other Supports

Part of being supportive is passing on that role to permanent people in a woman's life. Early in the counseling process you should help the woman identify other supports such as family and friends so she may begin to build an ongoing support system. Often the woman in an abusive marriage is isolated and has few supports; she may have been rejected by family and friends who have lost patience with her turmoil or are critical of her decisions to leave or stay. You can help her identify possible new supports and encourage her to build them. This may include seeking new friends, developing new interests, and contacting others in similar situations such as battered women's support groups, social groups for newly single people or single parents, churches, educational activities, etc. This may be a new and difficult process for her, and she will need your support to keep trying, as new contacts may not work out well at first. Encourage her to try several options and have patience as new friendships are being built.

Contracting

Probably the least supportive thing you could do, as a counselor is to fail to provide the support you have promised. Therefore, it is important to contract early with a woman to agree upon what things she will do, what you will do together, and what you will do for her. Also, let her know clearly when you are available, and who will be available when you are not.

Counseling Skills: Practical Help With Her Situation

Getting Good Background Information

In order to realistically assess the options, good background information on the woman's situation is critical. However, some women will be unwilling to discuss their situation in detail until they first receive some general information and feel reassured from your attitude that you will not be critical, so you should never push for information. On the other hand, a woman's question of "Why do you ask that?" is often not as much a reluctance to divulge things as a curiosity about the relevance of the information, and once you tell her why a particular piece of information is important, she will most likely be glad to discuss it, in actuality almost everything about the woman's life situation may be relevant to an understanding of what

actions will be effective with particular partner and also in terms of court actions. With experience, you will learn to be direct in asking questions and in explaining clearly why they are important, and you will be surprised that most women are relieved to have someone to think with them about all the tangled details of their lives, once they are assured of confidentiality and your sincere concern.

There are several specific areas of information which are relevant, and which you should ask about. You will probably not want to go into great detail in a crisis situation, but if you work with a woman over a period of time, you will probably at some point want to talk with her about the following areas.

➢ *Personal Information*

Most women who call are willing to give their name, address, and phone number, and you should ask for this information. If she does not want to tell you, reassure her that you will still help her, and try to work out some kind of code, such as a number, for your records and also so she can identify herself to you if she wants to call again. Reassure the woman that her name is kept confidential—but try to find out her address right away in case she wants you to send the police in a crisis. Also, you will need this information if she wants you to advocate for her with police and courts. Other personal information will be important in assessing her options includes her age, her marital status, the number and ages of her children, whether or not she is living with the abuser, and whether he has weapons.

➢ *Resources*

Although it seems difficult and nosey to ask a woman about her finances, it affects her choices both in crisis (Can she afford a motel?) and in long-term planning (What kind of legal help can she afford? How will she support herself and her children?) You should ask her about both emergency money and her overall financial picture when discussing her future plans - her income, her partner's income, and other assets, such as bank accounts, stocks, and property. She needs to be aware of these things and may need to take legal steps to protect her interest in case of a separation. Also ask her about other family and friends who can help with money, emotional support, or places to stay. Other resources to assess include transportation, other counselors, ministers, childcare, and job skills.

The Immediate Incident

Usually when the woman calls, some recent incident of violence has motivated her call. The details of this incident are important, especially if she decides to use it in court. Details should include:

- ✓ Time and place of incident
- ✓ Description of what took place
- ✓ Description of her injuries
- ✓ Threats made
- ✓ Property damage
- ✓ Weapons
- ✓ Alcohol or drug abuse (by herself or the abuser)

- ✓ Involvement of children (did they witness the incident? Were they in danger? Were they abused also?)

- ✓ Police involvement (were they called? Who were they? What was their response?)
- ✓ Medical attention (what hospital? What was recorded on the medical report?)
- ✓ Legal action taken

It is also a good idea to ask her if anything happened with which her abuser could file a counter claim--if she fought back or if she was drunk for instance, this could weaken her case and will affect her decision of whether or not to pursue the complaint; also knowing what the abuser's defense is likely to be and what accusations may be made in court will help you and her in preparing for court.

History

The more the history of the relationship is explored, the more the pattern of abuse will emerge and the more clear it will become what steps may be most effective in ending the abuse. History should include:

- ✓ Length of the relationship
- ✓ When and how abuse began
- ✓ History of abuser (abused as child? Military? Arrest record?)
- ✓ History of the victim (abused child? Parents abusive of each other?)
- ✓ Pattern of the abuse (how does it start? What triggers it? What ends it? Severity?)
- ✓ Past abusive incidents (how frequent? What led up to them? What happened?)
- ✓ Solutions tried (police? Hospital? Court actions? Counseling?)
- ✓ Drug or alcohol problems of victim or abuser
- ✓ Psychiatric treatment of institutionalization of victim or abuser

-From *Counseling the Abuse Victim,* by Linda Shaw for PCADV

Problem Solving Model

It is extremely helpful in a crisis situation to have a practiced problem-solving model to provide structure and organization for the counselor and the victim/survivor. Essentially, this model gives you one method to organize a call. Such a model assists you in guiding a caller through the different aspects of their problem to some sort of decision as to what to do next. It assists you, the counselor, by providing a general plan of what you would like to accomplish during a call.

Remember that not all callers will be ready to go through all ten steps of the model. Perhaps the caller has called to get a better idea of the problem. She may spend her time defining and redefining the problem and exploring her feelings regarding the problem. At this point she may want to wait before she decides what she wants to do.

The Problem Solving Model presented below is intended as a guideline for you to use when it seems appropriate. It is meant to provide some organization in your approach to callers if you feel you or the caller needs such structure. Please remember that this is not a replacement for active listening. It is most important that you use your listening skills to hear, reflect, clarify, summarize, etc. It is also important that you continue to focus on the person's feelings. The problem-solving model can be used to provide direction when needed, but it cannot replace

active listening skills.

- **Assist caller to define the problem.**

This can take a lot of time in itself. Both you and the caller need a clear-cut idea of what you're talking about before trying to do something about it.
Get the caller to give you the specifics and details of the problem. After you have an overall picture of the problem, it is important to help the caller focus on one aspect of the problem at a time. (Example: "It sounds like you and your partner have a lot of differences right now that are bothering you. But, your main concern seems to be the hitting. Maybe you could tell me a little more about that.")

- **Focus on what it would be like when the problem is solved.**

This step can help the person imagine what her life would be like after she solves the problem. Sometimes allowing the person to look ahead will give you (and her) an idea of what she wishes would happen, which can then be explored.

- **Examine barriers to change.**

How has she been avoiding the problem? What is or has been in the way of solving the problem? What keeps her from changing? What keeps the situation from changing? What does she feel is maintaining the problem? Discuss her feelings about these.

- **Determine the costs involved**.

What is the cost of solving the problem? What is the cost of her keeping the problem? What are the gains or rewards of solving and of keeping the problem? Discuss her feelings about these.

- **Explore alternatives**.

List as many alternatives (or possible steps in solving problem) as possible. Discuss the pros and cons of each alternative.

- **Discuss her feelings about each alternative**.

- **Make a plan.**

Have the caller list what she wants to do (in specifics) and in what order. Ask her what she considers the most important steps. Help her set up a plan that is short, specific, and achievable. Help her to establish a time frame for completing the plan. Get a commitment from her to follow through on the plan.

- **Discuss what will happen if the plan fails.**

How will she feel? How will she go about adjusting her plan or generating anew plan?

- **Discuss how she may sabotage the plan.**

What might go wrong with the plan? In what ways might the costs and gains of solving the problem (generated in #4) influence the plan?

- **Follow-Up!!!**

Express your interest in knowing what happens. Ask her to call and tell the phone counselor what is happening, or arrange to call her at a convention time.

-From Centre County Women's Resource Center

Safety Plan

Programs will often work with women who are uncertain about whether they want to leave their abuser or who, even after a supportive, helpful stay at the shelter, will decide to return to the relationship or choose to do so at some future time. A decision about leaving, returning or staying is included in the range of options an individual woman has available to her as she assesses how she will respond to the abuse. Our role is to assist her in reviewing all of those options both at the point of first contact as well as in any subsequent contacts we may have with her. Her needs for safety, information and time to talk as well as her feelings about the relationship will change each time she reaches out to us for support. We have a responsibility to respond to her needs at the moment and not base our support on her previous decisions or actions.

Such assistance however must be realistic and not jeopardize her safety. Therefore, whether a woman chooses to stay with or to leave her abuser, staff's discussions with her will also include the formulation of safety plans in the event she is again threatened by abuse. A discussion of the lethality of her abuser and identification of any escalation occurring in the violence are critical components of this review.

Safety plans will vary dependent upon the individual situation but are likely to include: identifying a place to go to in case of an emergency, such as a friend or relative's, as well as the local shelter; setting aside extra money and car keys and packing a bag in anticipation of the need to leave quickly; obtaining extra copies of prescriptions for herself and/or the children; or developing agreed upon signals with neighbors, friends or relatives as a clear call for help when abuse occurs.

Plans may also incorporate steps to take when the abuser's tactics of control include attempts to locate her through other sources such as the children at school or situations in which a risk of child kidnapping exists. Information about a woman's safety plan must never be shared with batterers. In addition, every safety plan needs a back-up plan for secure shelter if the other elements fail.

An important part of building safety is re-establishing community and support and the formulation of safety plans are often enhanced by collaboration with other battered women. Group discussion will invariably raise issues that an individual woman might not consider. However, one caution about group planning activities is that each battered woman's reality is different. Therefore, each safety plan must be individually tailored. A formula approach to safety planning will endanger and disempower battered woman.

Rehearsal is a key factor in the effectiveness of safety plans. Battered women should walk through safety plans in order to evaluate their feasibility. Modifications may be made when rehearsal reveals flaw. Once a plan appears appropriate to a battered woman, she should literally

practice this plan with enough repetition so that it comes quickly and completely to her recollection during crisis.

It is critical that battered women understand that safety plans must be flexible. Plans must change as the circumstances merit alteration.

As a part of safety planning when a woman has decided to separate from the abuser we should explore the following considerations with her.

Legal Implications

If a woman leaves the home because she fears for her own physical safety, she cannot be charged with desertion. She and her husband still have "equal rights" as far as custody of the children and joint property are concerned. She does have the right to return home to retrieve personal possessions of hers or the children. As a practical matter, it may be advisable to have someone go with her (perhaps the police if she fears more violence) or she should go when the abuser if not there. If married to the abuser, the spouse is still legally obligated to support her and the children. Realistically, this is often hard to enforce. Advise her to contact the Domestic Relations Office for a support order or to call an attorney.

If the children are also her abuser's children, the abuser can legally prevent her from taking them with her when she leaves. Her parental rights are equal, however. She can wait until he leaves the house, and then leave with the children.

Money:

Although there are legal obligations for support, as mentioned before, they are sometimes difficult to enforce. The woman and her children may be eligible for assistance from the County Board of Assistance. Local offices can be contacted for financial assistance, food stamps and medical care.

When thinking of leaving, suggest she carefully evaluate her financial needs and possible places to obtain money. She must take birth certificates for the children and a marriage license if she plans to apply for any public benefits like food stamps.

Harassment:

Her abuser may threaten or harass her at the house of friends or relatives. Often it is hard to find people to help because they fear this, but remember, her abuser can be charged with various criminal charges if she or the people helping her are bothered in such ways. Harassment is a criminal charge, and should be pursued through the District Attorney. If a Protection Order (218) has been entered, the abuser may be charged with contempt of court. If violence is a problem, advise her to try to keep her new address confidential. If she has no other options, she may want to contact the local shelter.

Items To Take When Leaving:

Suggest she begin to gather these together in anticipation of having to run in an emergency.

- ✓ Social security cards for herself and children
- ✓ Birth certificates of the children
- ✓ Personal address/telephone book
- ✓ Change of clothes for herself and the children for several days
- ✓ Her car, including her owner's card, her driver's license, and extra car keys in the house
- ✓ A set of house keys
- ✓ Her checkbook and savings book
- ✓ Rent receipts for the last two months
- ✓ All cash accessible to her
- ✓ Children's immunization records
- ✓ All necessary medications, hers and children's, including prescription
- ✓ Extra pair of glasses/contacts
- ✓ Charge cards

If a battered women is not yet ready to leave her home, you might suggest to her that many of the items on this list could be kept in duplicate form at the home of a friend or family member so that she would not necessarily have to locate all of these items and pack them up before leaving in an emergency situation.

-Compiled by PCADV and Women's Center, Montgomery County.

Survival Tips for Battered Women

- ✓ Call the police--911.
- ✓ Keep the following with someone you trust: a spare set of keys, a set of clothes, important papers, prescriptions or duplicates and some money.
- ✓ Keep any evidence of physical abuse such as ripped clothes, photos of bruises and injuries, etc.
- ✓ Call the hotline to find out about the laws, shelters and other resources
- ✓ available to you before you have to use them.
- ✓ Know where you can go for help. Keep these numbers where you can find them easily if you need them.
- ✓ Tell someone you know and trust what is happening to you so that if you need to get out of your home in a hurry; you will have someone you can turn to.
- ✓ If you are injured, go to a hospital emergency room or doctor and tell
- ✓ them what happened to you.
- ✓ Support may also be available through your local church or synagogue.

▪ -Prepared by Women Against Abuse